

# News Release



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## Berkeley Teens 'Pedaling for Peace' On 600-mile trip to Santana High School

BERKELEY, Calif. – In an effort to help stop teen violence by focusing attention on what teenagers can accomplish when given the resources and the opportunity, 19 inner-city high school students are preparing to ride bicycles from Berkeley 600 miles south to San Diego County's Santana High School, the scene of a deadly school shooting in March.

The ride is scheduled to begin Monday, Aug. 6, with a ceremony at Berkeley High School. Berkeley Chief of Police Dash Butler has agreed to ride with the students on the first day. A Berkeley High teacher and a Berkeley police officer are among the chaperones that have agreed to ride the entire coastal route.

The ride, which is being sponsored by the Berkeley Police Activities League, the East Bay Asian Youth Center and the California Department of Parks and Recreation, is scheduled to end with a ceremony at Santana High School on Aug. 20. Progress of the students can be monitored by visiting a special website at [www.projectRISE.net](http://www.projectRISE.net).

The "Pedaling for Peace" project, as the students are calling their ride, will take them along the California coastline on scenic Highway 1. For some of the students it will be their first trip outside the San Francisco Bay Area. The California Department of Parks and Recreation is setting up camps at state parks along the way, beginning with Half Moon State Beach and ending with San Elijo State Beach.

"State Parks is proud to lend its support to an event like this," said California State Parks Director Rusty Areias. "A major goal at State Parks is to provide safe places where kids of all ages and from all walks of life can have fun. Helping end violence, whether it be at schools or anywhere else, is an important part of that mission."

Catherine Jamison, director of the Berkeley Boosters Association/Police Activities League, is director of the "Pedaling for Peace" project. She noted that the students participating in the ride have

been identified as at-risk, and that the program will help these students individually, and others by example.

“The ‘Pedaling for Peace’ program will reduce the risk factors of anti-social behavior, violence and gang involvement by providing structured, supervised activities,” Jamison said. Students on the team have been responsible for major aspects of planning the trip, including fundraising and budget planning. They also have been participating in athletic training sessions a minimum of four times a week in preparation for the trip.

“Recent research and literature has shown that youth develop more resilience when they participate in programs that offer meaningful opportunities for involvement and decision-making,” Jamison said. “The students have already presented detailed feedback regarding their needs and profound desire to participate in a program like this.”

Adriana Betti, program manager for the RISE program of the East Bay Asian Youth Center, said, “All the riders for ‘Pedaling for Peace’ are teenagers of color. Too often they are portrayed in negative ways. The kids are hoping this event will go a long way toward dispelling unfair stereotypes by making such a demonstration against youth violence.”

Each participant will be required to keep a daily written journal during the trip, describing his or her experiences in the program. Before, after and during the program the Berkeley participants will be required to correspond with their peers at Santana High School. Two Berkeley High School students are working with a teacher to produce a documentary about the trip.

Arrangements have been made to have students from local youth groups and police activities leagues meet the riders along the route.

Even before the ride began, the “Pedaling for Peace” project received widespread support from the local community. The Berkeley Police Department donated all the bicycles for the trip. Local bike shops Velo Sports, Mike’s Bicycle Center, Solano Avenue Cyclery and Wrench Science donated goods and services, and three local restaurants – Mario’s La Fiesta, Mi Tierra Foods and Juan’s Place –helped raise funds for the ride.

Besides Chief Butler, two members of the Berkeley Police Department are participating in “Pedaling for Peace.” Captain Bobby Miller is riding for two days, and Officer Marianne Jamison is riding the full route. Mario Campbell, a University of California, Berkeley student who has served as a mentor to the children, and Berkeley High School teacher Marcella Taylor also are riding the 600-mile route. Additional donations are still needed

The students will be riding as much as 60 miles a day. About midway through the trip, they will take a day off at Hearst Castle® in San Simeon to tour the castle and visit the beach. The ride will end with a closing ceremony on Monday morning, Aug. 20, at Santana High School in Santee near San Diego. Santana High School was the scene of a school shooting last year that left two students dead and 13 wounded. A 15-year-old boy was arrested and charged with the crime.

